Title III Evaluation Report
Third Year Interim Assessment
Development Institute, Inc.
Suffolk County Community College (SCCC) began its Title III Strengthening Institutions project – *Student Engagement through Informed Support (SEIS)* – in October of 2010. As described in the abstract, the overall purpose of the project is to “dramatically improve the success of students as they transition from their first contact with the College, through the series of heavily subscribed gateway courses, to become accomplished learners.” With one major Activity, the project tackles the need to engage and support students by intensifying and expanding their access to resources and services technologically. To that end, the College is electronically enabling enrollment and admissions, reorganizing faculty academic advising, instituting an early warning and intervention system, developing learning objects to enhance learning support for gateway courses, and unifying student support resources through a Virtual Learning Commons. With the focus squarely on student success, *SEIS* is designed to increase successful course completion and student persistence, retention and satisfaction. Now at the midpoint of the third year, SCCC will complete development to fully implement and institutionalize the initiative by September 2015.

During the inaugural year of the Title III project, the College contracted with Development Institute, a Boston consulting firm, with Dr. Katherine German, Vice President, serving as the external evaluator. Dr. German has been involved with the design and implementation of Title III programs since 1980, several with SCCC, and held a variety of leadership roles within higher education over the past thirty years. She is currently working
with numerous institutions on the development and evaluation of Title III projects as well as other grant initiatives and change efforts within higher education.

Prior to the campus visit of April 25 and 26, 2012, Dr. German reviewed the College’s overall five-year project plan as well as other related documents and outlined the evaluation criteria specified in the project for the first year of implementation. These criteria, defined by the project objectives and anticipated results, are incorporated into the evaluation report for use as benchmarks against which to measure the progress of the project to date.

While on campus for the third annual interim assessment Dr. German conducted a series of structured interviews to ascertain the progress that has occurred within the elements of the overall activity under development. During these discussions, she met with Dr. Marlene DuBois, the Title III Coordinator; Christine Crowe, the Title III Activity Director; Dr. William Tucker, the Grants Officer; Min Su, Title III Research Specialist; and Muriel Lanier, the Title III Administrative Assistant regarding overall project organization, management and development. During the visit she also met with two key faculty members involved in project development and implementation, including: Alexandra Belanich, Title III Tech Support; and Jordan Neus, Mathematics Faculty.

Overall discussion focused on the achievements of the last six months, issues that have arisen, and plans for the future. Throughout the evaluation, the participants enthusiastically described their involvement, accomplishments, and expectations for the project. As part of the review, Dr. German shared her perceptions of project implementation with the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, Dr. Carla Mazarelli, and, subsequently, the President, Dr. Shaun McKay, as well as the Title III Project Coordinator and Activity Director.
Needs Assessment

In advance of proposal submission, Suffolk County Community College faculty and staff engaged in an extensive, highly participatory analysis of the strengths, weaknesses and major problems inhibiting institutional growth and self-sufficiency. The analysis drew from multiple sources including the SCCC Strategic Plan, the Middle States Review, Gardner’s Foundations of Excellence Self-Report, and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement results as well as related internal reports and studies produced by the Institutional Research office.

Building on the institution’s academic, managerial, and fiscal strengths, the project addresses eight critical weaknesses in the same areas:

- Academic weaknesses include a disjointed enrollment and intervention system, insular instructional delivery, and inaccessible onsite academic support system.
- Managerial weaknesses include incomplete enterprise system implementation and integration, inconsistent and underpowered web presence, and technical limitations.
- Fiscal weaknesses include an inadequate budget for institutional development and an insufficient institutional endowment.

Taken together, these weaknesses significantly impact the College’s ability to sustain student progress to graduation, producing a single overarching problem to be addressed by the project:

Entering student academic achievement, persistence, retention and satisfaction are devastated by legacy enrollment, advising and academic support systems that fail to connect with one another or the students they purport to serve.

By enabling enrollment, advising and intervention systems, enhancing gateway courses, and enriching teaching and learning with a virtual learning commons the project seeks to significantly increase student success and satisfaction.

Scope of the Project

A single activity, Student Engagement through Informed Support (SEIS) presents a holistic, comprehensive approach to student success by reconstructing the SCCC educational
experience, linking instruction with enhanced support systems. Three interrelated components designed to help students become accomplished learners will improve their success as they transition from their first contact with the College through a series of heavily subscribed ‘gateway’ courses, continuing their studies to graduation. The first component enables student success through the development of an electronic enrollment, advising and intervention system to streamline records management and coordinate admissions with continuous active monitoring thereafter, enabling timely intervention and mobilizing a refined faculty advising network. Thereafter, the second component enhances student success through the implementation of on-line learning objects developed by teaching faculty and integrated with the curriculum to enhance academic support for 20 gateway courses. And finally, the third component enriches teaching and learning through the implementation of a college-wide Virtual Learning Commons which provides a unified delivery system for all of the available resources – on-line and on-site - through a one-stop portal linking all learning resources - libraries, writing, math, and academic skills centers as well as gateway course learning objects - with an early alert and intervention system. As a result, processes for enrollment, advising, learning, and engaging with the College will be transformed across the institution and student success will increase: both student satisfaction with the college experience and gateway course completion will improve by 20 percent, persistence will improve by 15 percent, and retention will improve by 10 percent. By 2015, the Activity will be fully institutionalized to ensure the continuing vitality of the institution and the success of its students.
**Year Three Interim Activity Assessment**

Already at the midpoint of the five-year implementation process, the Title III Leadership Team sustained the energy generated through the collaborative spirit established from the start with giant steps forward technologically and pedagogically. Four major objectives focus the work of the Activity for the third year of implementation:

1. Increase from 50 to 80% the accessibility of enrollment and advising by 9/30/2013;
2. Increase from 10 to 15 supported gateway courses by 9/30/13;
3. Increase from 48 to 81% the accessibility of the Virtual Learning Commons by 9/30/13; and
4. Increase from 69 to 82% FT/FT student success in 10 gateway courses with enhanced support by 9/30/13 (2009 – 2010 baseline).
5. Increase from 73 to 77% the number of students persisting from fall to spring by 9/30/13 (2007 - 2008 baseline).

As a result of the third year’s work, 4,550 students will be oriented and assessed with expanded assessment tools, an online orientation, and three staffed Faculty Mentoring/Advising Centers. Meanwhile, the faculty continue to design - or adopt - learning objects to support key concepts in five additional courses, and new scripts link Banner D2L and Luminis to enable virtual advising, orientation and tutoring. By this point, it is anticipated that 718 sections will access enhancements via the VLC across 15 targeted gateway courses. And finally, at this juncture, efforts to assess the impact on achievement and persistence will be initiated. First, successful course completion will be assessed for a targeted 20% increase in completion across 20 sections of the following courses: COM101, COL101, MAT001, MAT006, MAT007, COL105, PSY101, RDG098, RDG099, and BIO101. And second, continuing enrollment from fall to spring will be assessed for a targeted 5% increase in persistence across the 2,400 students participating in the full enrollment process, including assessment, orientation and advising.
Enrollment and Advising

The Enrollment and Advising (E&A) and Faculty Mentoring & Student Engagement (FM&SE) Teams have done a tremendous job in its pursuit of systemic improvements in the student experience. During the inaugural year, the E&A Team improved electronic workflow, and web-enabled application capability, streamlining transcripting and assessment; during the second year the Team improved the functionality of the web application, created the advising and testing database and integrated it with Banner; and this year a subgroup of the Faculty Mentoring & Student Engagement Team is expanding assessment through the integration of ACT Engage, a non-cognitive assessment of student readiness, piloting an online orientation in the fall, and intensifying advising through the Faculty Mentoring and Advising Centers (FMAC) on the campuses. Related to the Enrollment and Advising component, a second team working on Faculty Mentoring and Student Engagement initially considered best practices related to advising as teaching and advising strategies and tools, refining pervasive concepts of ‘advising’ and ‘mentoring’ respectively. Ultimately, the Team developed a new model for Mentoring and Engagement with all incoming students receiving initial advisement through the Counseling Center making a transition to the faculty advising and mentoring system in the middle of their first semester. With the model defined, the Team evolved to engage more faculty in the process as the model was initiated, the Advising Handbook refined, and faculty training expanded to support the implementation of the new model.
At this juncture, the *ACT Engage* assessment is offered to students enrolled in COL105, the College Seminar, through a subscription-based system with the results integrated into the substance of the course for intensified impact. The instrument addresses three major factors:

- **Motivation and Skills** – the personal characteristics that maintain goal direction, e.g., discipline, determination, commitment, study and communication skills;

- **Social Engagement** – the interpersonal factors that influence integration and adaptation, e.g., social connections and activities; and

- **Self-Regulation** – the cognitive and affective processes that monitor, regulate and control behaviors toward learning, e.g., academic self-confidence and steadiness.

The results of this initial usage will be assessed over the course of the summer, with refinements in the use of the readiness assessment during advising anticipated in the fall.

Meanwhile, as the orientation team completes its purchase of a new online system, work on advising has made significant progress. Two professional staff now contribute to the FMAC activities established on the campuses, supplemented by strong on-line connections. Armed with computer access and a plethora of advising materials, the staff and faculty who advise for the Centers are quite busy, already connecting with over 2,400 first-time, full-time students along with their peers who do not fall into this particular category. So far, 170 of the anticipated 200 full-time faculty members have been trained in the new advising model, one that promotes the development of an ongoing relationship to support the students to graduation rather than simply building a schedule for the next semester. Reaching faculty on all campuses, the Team has trained 21 faculty members on the Eastern Campus, 72 on the Ammerman Campus, and 77 on the Grant Campus with the intention of providing additional training over the summer in preparation for the start of the new academic year. From all
indications, the emerging model seems to be working beautifully as preliminary research indicates that students connected to faculty advisors were a full 5 percent more successful in their coursework than those who did not connect – terrific! Moreover, the impact of all of the work completed to date through Enrollment and Advising has had an even more impressive impact with student persistence 12 percent higher than the 2007-2008 baseline – more than double the 5 percent target! This data is most encouraging, and should propel the combined initiatives forward during the balance of the year. Tremendous progress has been made by the Faculty Mentoring & Student Engagement Team, with every initiative developed collaboratively and implemented college-wide, a very difficult task. Now as ACT ENGAGE proves itself and new systems such as DegreeWorks are integrated into the process, the collective will need to determine how to capitalize on these new tools to accelerate student success. Again, the members of the Team are commended for their foresight and tenacity! Well done!

**Gateway Course Support Enhancement**

The second team of faculty and staff known as the Gateway Course Support Enhancement (GCSE) Team consists of five discipline-based teams to identify key concepts for support with on-line learning objects to increase student learning and achievement. During the first year, eight groups of learning objects were developed and/or collected for five gateway courses, two college seminars and three developmental math courses: Freshman Seminar, Personal Growth and College Life, Developmental Math Skills, Pre-Algebra, and Algebra I. In the second year, five additional courses were addressed: , Introduction to Psychology, Introduction to College Reading, Reading in the Content Areas, Communications and Introduction to Biology.
And this year five more courses were addressed: Developmental Writing, Statistics, Spanish, Philosophy and College Algebra.

A review of two of the learning objects provides a window into the thinking behind the design of the learning objects as well as the potential impact. For example, the Statistics team developed a very engaging story in which a rather quirky avatar named “Skeeter” engages in a conversation about a sticky statistical concept called the “Z score” with his friendly local bartender, a conversation that subsequently leads into a full explanation and application of the concept. Totally unexpected from the Stat Team, the learning object is both information and humorous – a winning combination, especially in statistics! In another instance, the Developmental Writing Group took a different tack, one which is equally engaging, with the design of a learning object describing the writing process. What is particularly enthralling about this tool is the use of modern film to demonstrate each of the key concepts inherent in the writing process. Developed with clarity and insight, this particular learning object should have utility far beyond the basic writing courses; in effect, many faculty across the disciplines could readily direct their students to this object for writing assistance. Clearly, the design and the production of these two learning objects demonstrate significant advances in the concept of a ‘learning object’; it is most exciting to see the faculty exercising their creativity with increased confidence, clarity, and skill. Now the issue to be considered for existing learning objects is usage; the faculty on the design teams are sold on the objects, but their colleagues not so much. It will take a full court press to increase the usage of the learning objects if students are to realize their full impact.
In the meantime, however, in an effort to increase faculty involvement in the development of learning objects the Team also created mini-grants – an award of $500 for instructors – individually or in groups - to learn the applications and skills required to create learning objects. This new initiative seems to have caught on beautifully, with ten additional topics proposed by faculty designers to be developed over the summer: Culinary Arts, Reading Primary Sources, Fundamental Accounting Principles, Astronomy, Benefits of Mentorship, Guided Interactive Self-assessment in Anatomy and Physiology, Functions in Math, Pre-calculus II, Digital Identity Awareness, and Flashcard-based Method of Studying. As a mechanism to expand the availability of learning objects, the mini-grant is a winner; now the Team needs to create a similar strategy to recognize levels of usage and assess the comparative impact.

One of the truly exciting aspects of the movement into learning objects is the development of facility with an expanding tool set. At the outset, faculty borrowed learning objects from others and tested the capacity of PowerPoint to engage students and promote learning. Then the tool set expanded with the addition of Camtasia as faculty authored the text, figures and animations, using commercial assets only when necessary. Next, Flash was added to the tool set as interactive unit quizzes were developed, and then other open source materials were added to the cache and, as an extra added attraction, “IT Genie” (a virtual expert) was hired! Throughout this development process, faculty have worked together enthusiastically to craft explanations, multimedia demonstrations, quizzes, worksheets, and lexicons, all of which are linked with the curriculum and embedded into the instructional process with Departmental approval. All departmental faculty are encouraged to become involved in their development and usage: some are requiring students to use the objects, while
others are simply noting their availability in the syllabus with little further encouragement of their use. Most faculty are promoting awareness of the learning objects to one extent or another; however, every effort will need to be made to eliminate perceived barriers and promote the accessibility of the learning objects, if not use them in their courses, a task best undertaken by the faculty themselves with their departmental colleagues perhaps with some creative reinforcement from the GCSE Team. Kudos to the gateway course teams!

**Virtual Learning Commons**

A third team, the Virtual Learning Commons Team (VLCT) has been working on the Commons. During the first year the Team created an inventory of the services to be linked with the Commons and preliminary site and process maps leading to the design of a production site complete with analytics to capture usage and impact. Over the next year, the site hosted six key disciplines and an initial core of student users who put the site to the test, resulting in two critical lessons: first, students are more likely to use the site if it is part of the class, and second, use of the site increases student performance. With that knowledge the press was on to increase student usage via an extensive publicity campaign: posters, flat screen TVs, and screensavers, as well as introductions to the site at advising sessions, in the College Seminar course, through the Student Activities Day, and via the Library college-wide. And this year the utility of the site has expanded considerably, increasing the accessibility of support services as well as learning objects college-wide.

Among the developments underway is the capacity of the Commons to host virtual advising, orientation and tutoring through a central access point for either synchronous - immediate - support via “Connect” or asynchronous - delayed - support. In effect, any area
seeking direct support can now use this feature, a boon to the provision of timely student support. With the anticipated upgrade to Luminis 5, the installation of DegreeWorks, and the potential of Blackboard Collaborate, the prospects for virtual advising and tutoring increase dramatically – exciting new developments to come – soon! Perhaps the VLC Team can facilitate some creative ways to accelerate development once the tools are in place.

In the interim, by fall 15 new sets of learning objects developed through the gateway course and mini-grant programs supporting instructional and advising will be hosted by the VLC bringing the total number of learning objects available to 25. So far this year, 1,830 first-time, full-time students have used the learning objects over an array of 20 targeted sections. Students participating indicate that they want more – more objects and more subjects covered – and the Team is eager to respond! Why? Because achievement is increasing! Preliminary date for a single semester indicates that students enrolled in ten targeted courses with learning objects saw an 8 percent increase in successful course completion – and if they specifically used the learning objects the increase was doubled to 16 percent, a pattern very nearly like that established last year. Moreover, more students are using the objects since last year as the saturation rate increased from 7 percent to 13 percent – enough to prove the concept. Now as the project continues to evolve toward Luminis 5 and ADA compliance, everyone, faculty, staff and students, needs to realize the benefits of the Virtual Learning Commons. Congratulations to the faculty and staff who have devoted their creative energies to the effort – it is clearly only beginning to make the difference that was imagined with considerably more impact to come!

Much has been accomplished during the first two years of work to develop the foundation of the project, and now during the third year the structure is coming along nicely!
Faculty are fully engaged in each of the Teams within which collaborative development is the norm, a modus operandi that bodes well for the future of the project and the success of the students! Now as the third year continues, it will become increasingly important to make sure that each of the initiatives is sufficiently developed and integrated with the learning process to intensify and expand the impact to all students, not just the lucky few!

**Project Management**

SCCC’s Title III project is integrated within the institutional structure with the President of the College, Dr. Shaun McKay, assuming overall leadership responsibility, with the Title III Team fully incorporated into the management of the organization, and with faculty and staff fully involved in the implementation of the Activity. The Title III Coordinator, Marlene DuBois, reports directly to the President and works closely and effectively with the Activity Director, Christine Crowe. While the Activity Director is responsible for and fully engaged in the day-to-day implementation of the project, the Coordinator is responsible for the provision of overall guidance for and supervision of project operations; compliance with all relevant requirements at the local, state and federal levels; the establishment of effective communication networks; the approval of expenditures and management of budgets; the maintenance of records and documentation; and the coordination of evaluation procedures culminating in the preparation and submission of required reports as the liaison with the Department of Education and the assigned Program Officer, Pearson Owens.

The components of the Activity are under the purview of project personnel and fully incorporated into the organizational structure under the supervision of appropriate College administrators. A comprehensive *Title III Policies and Procedures Handbook* guides project
implementation and provides direction for all major initiatives to be undertaken. Staff hired for Title III positions are selected in accordance with established hiring procedures at the College with appropriate position descriptions and time-and-effort forms filed for all project personnel. Project records are maintained by Muriel Lanier, the Administrative Assistant, electronically and in hard copy. Additionally, all project expenditures are initiated by the Team Leaders in concert with the Activity Director, Title III Coordinator and reviewed by the appropriate College officer(s) prior to submission to the Business Office. Both the Title III Coordinator and the Business Manager approve each project expenditure to ensure compliance with the approved budget and all federal and state regulations. Program records are maintained in the Business Office under proper standards of accounting with statements available to the Title III Activity Director, the Coordinator, and the President.

Through the work of the Research Specialist, Dr. Min Su, a baseline database was developed to include the storage of all relevant data required to provide appropriate benchmarks for use throughout the implementation of – and upon conclusion of – the project; over the course of the project this database has been expanded to include additional measures of importance to the implementation process. Meetings of the Task Force, composed of key stakeholders across the institution, the President’s Executive Staff, and Governance Leaders, provide opportunities for collaboration and communication as well as planning and problem-solving to ensure the success of the Activity and produce the intended impact of the project. Reports addressing Title III accomplishments are prepared and shared broadly during regular meetings of the Task Force and other appropriate venues. Additionally, at key events in the calendar of the College, such as the Professional Development Day held in March, the
President, the Title III Coordinator and the Activity Director, along with faculty and staff involved in the effort, provide briefings and updates, as well as showcases and professional development opportunities for colleagues throughout the College community. Additionally, a robust website houses all major documents associated with the project, providing ubiquitous access to current information regarding the progress of the Teams working on project initiatives, and this spring a newsletter, *SCCC ENGAGE*, was inaugurated highlighting accomplishments, a great new addition to the communications roster.

The negotiated budget for the third year of implementation was submitted to the Department of Education to accommodate an award of $399,588; with carryover funds from the second year in the amount of $19,571 and the first year of $181,350, the funds available to support the project total $600,509. No formal budget amendments are anticipated at this point, with internal reallocations managed in accordance with the guidelines of the Department of Education to ensure the disbursement of funds in accordance with established Title III requirements.

**Conclusions, Commendations, and Recommendations**

*Student Engagement through Informed Support (SEIS)* is clearly well organized and extremely well managed, with faculty and staff fully engaged and working collaboratively across the board to ensure project success. The President, a strong advocate for the Project, is highly invested in the success of the venture; the Executive Staff and Governance Leaders are clearly involved in the effort; and the key components of the organization are fully supportive of the successful implementation of each component. The project leaders themselves are clearly focused, highly organized, and genuinely enthusiastic about the project; their creativity and
initiative is proving invaluable to the task of transforming the learning environment. And the faculty and staff involved in leading, designing and implementing each component of the Activity are both enthusiastic and fully steeped in the development process. This level of collegiate engagement is a testament to the strength of the leadership Team.

The first year of Student Engagement built on the legions of faculty and staff who participated in the design process by engaging them in the implementation process. The second year capitalized on that involvement with the development of substantive initiatives with the potential to transform student success. And now the third year is systematically expanding on those initiatives by making critical linkages across enrollment services, teaching and learning, and ubiquitous support systems while integrating new technologies that will ultimately knit the components together college-wide. As a result, each of the Teams working on the various components of the Activity are highly collaborative, engaging all components of the organization, and each of the Teams has made significant progress on the development of its specific initiatives:

- E&A and FM&SE implemented a streamlined enrollment and assessment process for all new students with improved functionality, effectiveness and efficiency, adding a readiness assessment, piloting a new advising model and approved Handbook with increased advising training and expanded usage of the Faculty Mentoring and Advising Centers on the campuses;

- GCSE fully implemented the five gateway courses with embedded learning objects, assessing their usage and impact, piloted the second five gateway courses for which learning objects were designed, and designed five learning objects for five additional courses as well as ten mini-grants, increasing the overall sophistication of the products with new tools and techniques while promoting expanded usage;

- VLC provided expanded access to the Virtual Learning Commons to support the expansion of gateway courses with access to learning objects developed during to date while simultaneously continuing to expand the site and the tool set in preparation for the move to Luminis 5 and significantly increased accessibility.
Underlying the success of these ventures is the technological infrastructure – the backbone of the project. While it was initially uncertain where the Virtual Learning Commons would reside, during the course of the past year it has become increasingly clear that Luminis 5 will be the new home. With additional tech support provided by the project, the progress of project development has accelerated, ensuring that the system will be scalable and ready to support the Virtual Learning Commons as it expands and matures. And finally, compounding this picture is the implementation of DegreeWorks which will have a major impact on the delivery of advising across the institution. With everyone engaged, the Team is ready to go!

With attention shifting from development to impact, it is quite a testament to the Title III Team that all components are on course to successfully complete the five objectives guiding implementation for the third year. Going forward, as it becomes more and more critical that all faculty and staff engage with improved services, expanded learning opportunities, and virtual support, the effort to meet targets will become more challenging and complex. Therefore, as the Title III Team continues through the third year of implementation, it might prove helpful to consider a few suggestions designed to bring the efforts of each and all of the components together to increase the synergy of their collective efforts:

- E&A and FM&SE Teams will need to address the integration of DegreeWorks within the enrollment and advising system, inviting all parties to consider the ultimate use of the new system to maximize the impact on student achievement, persistence, and retention to graduation. How, for example, can key student information and assessment data be integrated with the system to provide a context for continued support? Could the system actually trigger timely interventions to increase achievement and retention? What role should advisors, counselors, and support staff each play to ensure student progress to graduation? This effort will require a college-wide team composed of faculty, staff and administration examining the potential of the new tool, ensuring its effective integration into the system, engaging all users in essential training and development activities, and assessing the overall
impact on student success. While the work may prove challenging as the team seeks to implement a comprehensive enrollment and advising system consistent with the idiosyncratic needs of each campus, the results will be well worth the effort for faculty, staff and students as other institutions have clearly already discovered. Perhaps it would be useful to take the opportunity to consult peer institutions and learn from them, avoiding pitfalls while capitalizing on potential, to make the SCCC system sing! Once the system is designed, creative strategies need to be developed to prepare and encourage all faculty, staff and students actually use the system to improve student progress to graduation.

- GCSE will need to address efforts to expand not only the development, but also the usage of learning objects during the balance of the year, a task requiring some creative strategies. For example, perhaps all faculty teaching the freshman seminar could be invited to a specialized training session, engaging them in the creative use of the learning objects developed for their course within their own sections, perhaps requiring that students use the learning objects for assignments. Likewise, perhaps departments could sponsor the development of creative ways and means of enticing students to use the learning objects created for their courses across sections, even having a competition to see which courses might realize the most impact. Or perhaps a special effort could be made to showcase the integration and use of learning objects - particularly with the legions of adjunct faculty teaching many of the targeted courses. In short, now that it is clear that students find the learning objects useful and that they achieve higher success when they use them, the effort is to get ALL students using them. Creative support for faculty and staff to promote usage is the key to the success of this challenge.

- VLC will need to be ready to move with Luminis 5 which will present its own challenges as any new system does. Much progress has been made over the past two years, both in terms of providing access to support services and to learning objects, and the Team is ready to move into the stratosphere. Some vexing problems, such as ‘join group’ will need to be resolved, but the key going forward will be to find creative ways and means of using the new portal, DegreeWorks and Blackboard Collaborate to deliver services and support learning across all campuses 24/7. That said, in this process some additional questions will arise. For example: What is required to provide academic and student support services using the system? Are there creative ways in which students might be introduced to the system to increase utility? Will the VLC need to be iPhone accessible to maximize student usage? Integrating the work of each of the teams to expand student access to virtual learning and support will require incredible vision and intense cooperation across all parties, but the Team is clearly up to the challenge and again, it will prove well worth the investment.
Finally underlying each of these initiatives is assessment – what’s working, to what extent, why, and how can we build on it. These are questions that need to be explored together, with open conversation considering the opportunities and implications. When you are at the head of the pack, there is not a clear path forward other than that which you create. The assessment effort can be most helpful in charting the course and engaging more faculty, staff and students with these winning strategies, both within and beyond the institution as peer institutions seek to emulate your winning ways.

You’ve done a fantastic job with the implementation of Student Engagement to bring it to the mid-point, working collaboratively to address issues and solve problems to forge the pathway forward, and you’ve got everything that it takes to succeed: determination and focus, creativity and energy, tools and investment funds! From the small sample that initial research has provided it is clear that you are headed in the right direction and have only to continue, garnering support, expanding initiatives and creating capacity to intensify impact. The potential is obvious - now let’s see just how far you can go! Congratulations on your continuing success!